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mRNA-BASED COVID VACCINE CLEARED FOR PHASE-2/3 TRIALS

India's first mRNA-based Covid vax by Pune-based Gennova has been granted approval for phase-2 and -3 clinical trails

VAX SAFE, TOLERABLE: SUBJECT EXPERT PANEL

Gennova Biopharmaceuticals had submitted the interim clinical data of the vaccine's Phase 1 study to the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation, the Department of Biotechnology said on Tuesday. The Subject Expert Committee reviewed the interim Phase 1 data and found the vaccine to be safe, tolerable, and immunogenic in the participants

TO USE COVISHIELD FOR COMPARISON

- The trials will be conducted at 10-15 sites in Phase 2 and 22-27 sites in Phase 3. During trials, this mRNA-based vaccine will likely be compared with Covishiled and not any placebo
- Messenger RNA vaccines teach our cells how to make a protein that triggers an immune response in our bodies | P9

Storage

THE VAX CAN BE STORED BETWEEN 2-8°C, MAKING ITS DISTRIBUTION EASY

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

STREET FIGHTER AND SHIV SENA DEFECTOR

Narayan Rane was a Shiv Sena leader who later defected to the BJP. A street fighter, he is known for his crass language. Before his arrest, Rane threw his weight around, claimed he was not a 'normal' person, and warned the media against speculating about impending police action

Rane gets bail after arrest for Thackeray slur

Was denied anticipatory bail by Ratnagiri court & Bombay HC; BJP calls it vendetta

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI
@ Mumbai

HOURS after his arrest over an incendiary comment against Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Union minister Narayan Rane was granted bail late on Tuesday night.

The police took him to Mahad in Ratnagiri district, 160 km from Mumbai, where a local court granted bail on health grounds after remanding him in judicial custody. Earlier in the day, he was denied anticipatory bail by a Ratnagiri court and also the Bombay High Court.

Rane had sharply criticised Thackeray for losing count of the years since India got Independence during a speech on August 15, saying he would have given him a tight slap.

Multiple FIRs were filed against Rane and police teams sent from various places, including Pune and Nasik, to arrest him a day after his controversial statement.

He was arrested by the police around 2.30 pm at Sangameshwar in Ratnagiri district, where he was as part of his Jan Ashirwad Yatra. His son Ritish, who is an ex-Lok Sabha member, tried in vain to block the police personnel.

Criticising the arrest, BJP state vice president Prasad Lad claimed it was due to political vendetta. He alleged that the police manhandled Rane and did not even allow him to have food.

"Narayan Rane is Rajya Sabha member, minister, and a senior citizen, but the police did not respect it. This is vendetta," he said.

BJP national president J P Nadda called the arrest a violation of Constitutional values, adding the BJP cannot be threatened or silenced.

Rane is the third Union minister in harness to have ever been arrested in the country. The other two were DMK leaders Murasoli Maran and T R Baalu, who were ministers in the Vajpayee government. They were arrested in 2001 along with DMK chief M Karunanidhi in a what was called a flyover scam.

US to stay with Aug 31 evacuation deadline

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

US President Joe Biden on Tuesday said he would stick to the August 31 deadline for completing the evacuation of Americans and Afghan allies from the war-torn country. An emergency G7 meeting had urged him to continue evacuation through September in view of the ground situation. But, Biden decided against keeping troops on the ground any longer. He, however, told his national security team to create contingency plans if, for some reason, the deadline got extended, news agency AP reported.

In the 24-hour period that ended early Tuesday, the US flew out 21,600 people – the highest single-day count since the evacuation began. On Monday, the US had lifted 16,000 persons. US forces currently control the Kabul airport. Once they withdraw, it may not be possible for civilians from any country to leave.

On its part, the Taliban said it would not extend the August 31 deadline, saying there is enough time for the US and others to evacuate their nationals. It also said it would not allow Afghans to leave the country. Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said the huge crowds of Afghans gathered at the airport must return home, promising they would not face any reprisals. He added that women should stay home for the time being for their own safety.

There were also reports of the Taliban making key appointments ahead of government formation. According to Afghan media reports, the militia has appointed Gul Agha as finance minister, Sadr Ibrahim as acting interior minister, Najibullah as intelligence chief.

Meanwhile, CIA Director William Burns reportdly had a covert one-on-one meeting with Taliban co-founder Abdul Ghani Baradar on Monday. They reportedly reviewed the scenario post August 31. P12

14-day quarantine for Afghan evacuees

- Union health ministry has made 14-day institutional quarantine mandatory for evacuees from Afghanistan
- A special Air India flight on Tuesday brought 77 stranded people, including 46 Afghan Sikhs and Hindus, to Delhi P9

MONETISATION

PM destroying country's crown jewels, claims Rahul

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

HITTING out at the Centre's plan to monetise infrastructure assets, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of selling everything the past governments have created. The move is designed to benefit two or three businessmen and it will only create a monopoly that will cut down employment opportunities and destroy the informal sector, he alleged.

The ex-Congress chief clarified that his party is not against privatisation. The UPA government had a privatisation policy but strategic assets such as defence and railways were never privatised, he reasoned.

"The whole idea behind this exercise is to create monopoly for three or four people. Youngsters can't find jobs today as the entire small and medium industries has been destroyed... The reason is that the Prime Minister insists on building two or three monopolies that own everything in this country," he said, adding that the PM is destroying the crown jewels of the country.

Reacting to the allegations, the BJP pointed out that the UPA government, too, had sought to monetise assets. "In 2008, an RFP (request for proposal) with reference to the New Delhi railway station was announced when the Congress government was at the Centre. Is Rahul Gandhi alleging the government headed by his mother was audacious enough to sell the country," said Union minister Smriti Irani.

1

2

NOW, IT'S TIME FOR PARALYMPICS

The Paralympic Games was declared open with a colourful opening ceremony in Tokyo on Tuesday

INDIA'S MEDAL HOPES

India has sent its biggest contingent – 54 athletes – to compete at the Tokyo Paralympics. High jumper T Mariyappan, javelin thrower Devendra Jhajharia are the brightest medal prospects

1. Javelin thrower Tek Chand enters the National Stadium with the Indian flag during the opening ceremony in Tokyo on Tuesday 2. Fireworks illuminate the stadium | AP

Bommai to talk to legal experts on water disputes

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister Basavaraj Bommai, who is leaving for New Delhi on Wednesday, will discuss inter-state river water disputes and Mekedatu Balancing Reservoir Project with legal experts in the national capital. He is also likely to meet BJP central leaders to deliberate on filling four vacant posts in his cabinet.

The chief minister's schedule includes meetings with Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and other Central ministers on Thursday. With Shekhawat, he is likely to take up the long-pending clearance for the Mekedatu project. He is expected to meet Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, Finance Minister Nirmala Seetharaman, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to discuss various projects and to seek release of funds for the State.

Bommai on Tuesday said that he will be accompanied by Karnataka's Advocate General and senior advocates during his meeting with legal experts. They will discuss issues related to inter-state water disputes and the next course of action. "We should not politicise it. We are making all attempts to safeguard the State's interests and we will continue to do it," he added, responding to plans by JDS leaders to take out a padayatra demanding the implementation of the Mekedatu project.

CONTINUED ON: P4

INFY CROSSES $100 BN M-CAP; 4TH INDIAN FIRM TO DO SO

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

MARKET capitalisation (m-cap) of India's second-largest information technology (IT) company, Infosys, on Tuesday crossed the coveted $100 billion (Rs 7.44 lakh crore) mark. The Bengaluru-based IT major has now become only the fourth company in the country to enter the $100 billion club after Reliance Industries (RIL), Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and HDFC Bank.

Shares of Infosys rose nearly 1 per cent intra-day on Tuesday to hit a record high of Rs 1,755.60 on the BSE. This took the company's m-cap to Rs 7.47 lakh crore or $100.78 billion. However, as the session proceeded, Infosys lost its gain and closed the day 1% lower at Rs 1,720.75. Its market cap came down to 7.3 lakh crore, below the $100 billion mark.

A view of Infosys campus in Bengaluru

According to the latest m-cap data, Mukesh Ambani's RIL is the most-valued firm at Rs 13.8 lakh crore, followed by TCS at Rs 13.4 lakh crore and HDFC Bank at Rs 8.6 lakh crore. Infosys' main competitor TCS had hit m-cap of $100 billion in late April 2018. Infosys shares have been in high demand over the last one year, advancing over 83 per cent as against BSE Sensex rally of 44 per cent during the period. So far in 2021, the shares have rallied over 36 per cent, outperforming Sensex which has advanced 17 per cent.

Infosys shares have rallied around 11 per cent after the announcement of Q1 earnings on July 14. The company had reported a 23 per cent increase in net profit for the June quarter and raised its revenue guidance for FY22 to 14-16 per cent from the previous outlook of 12-14 per cent.

Analysts expect momentum in Infosys shares to continue as it has shown better demand traction in cloud, customer experience and cybersecurity, among other businesses than competition Wipro and TCS.

"We expect Infosys to deliver another year of an ongoing guidance raise as the current one does not fully factor in strong technology demand and execution of its record high deal wins. We have cut our FY22E/FY23E EPS estimate by 3.2 per cent/1.6 per cent to encompass margin pressure due to ongoing supply crunch in the industry and expected increase in travel expenses," said Motilal Oswal in a recent note.

MORE TROUBLE

Hair follicle test confirms actresses consumed drugs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru/Shivamogga

AN advanced hair follicle test conducted on the hair samples of Kannada actors Sanjjanaa Galrani and Ragini Dwivedi, who are out on bail after being incarcerated following a drug-related bust in the Kannada film industry, has confirmed that the two had consumed drugs.

It is the first time that the hair follicle test, conducted by the Hyderabad-based Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL), has been used in a drugs case under NDPS Act in Karnataka. If charges are proved, the two are liable to one-year imprisonment with a fine for the consumption of drugs. "This may prove to be vital evidence along with other bits of digital evidence we have gathered during the course of the investigation. This helps in getting the accused convicted. The report has been submitted to the Special Court for NDPS cases," an officer said. P7

JAB-O-METER

TAKE YOUR SHOT

August 23 **56,10,116 doses**
August 24 **54,67,551 doses**

TOTAL DOSES: 59,47,65,751

NATIONWIDE	AUG 23	AUG 24
Fresh cases	25,072	25,467
Recoveries	44,157	39,486
Deaths	389	354

KARNATAKA	AUG 23	AUG 24
Fresh cases	1,151	1,259
Recoveries	1,442	1,701
Deaths	10	29

Parties must have conduct code, says VP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

EXPRESSING concern over disruptions during proceedings in Parliament and state Assemblies, Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu on Tuesday suggested to political parties to evolve a code of conduct for their members.

"The code should be followed in the House and in public (life)," he said during an informal interaction with the media. "The parties should make the code of conduct public as an affidavit so that people have an opportunity to observe whether they follow the assurances given," he suggested.

Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu in Bengaluru on Tuesday | EXPRESS

Citing a newspaper article written by Congress MP Manish Tewari, he said that unfortunately, there is no correlation between a member's performance in Parliament and his or her renomination or re-election. This situation has to change. Ethics have to be maintained in public life. Members' performance in Parliament and constituencies should be taken into consideration when they seek reelection, he added.

"Character, calibre, capacity and conduct are very important. But, the four 'C's have been replaced by another set of four 'C's: Caste, Community, Cash and Criminality," he said. P6

What happened in the Rajya Sabha is unfortunate and has to be remedied at the earliest
Venkaiah Naidu, Vice President

Fresh to home
WEDNESDAY MARKET
Another Wednesday. Another meaty mid-week sale!
Fresh Products | Best Deals | 90 Min Delivery
Goat (Curry Cut) ₹798/kg
Chicken (Curry Cut) ₹215/kg
Prawns (Whole) ₹225/500g
Baasa Boneless Fillet ₹225/500g
Chettinad Chicken ₹99/Pack
Mutton Samosa ₹125/Pack
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100+ Quality Checks
No Antibiotic Residue
No Added Chemicals
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